

# THE COLUMNS

A Publication for the Residents of Mission Hills

Summer 2004



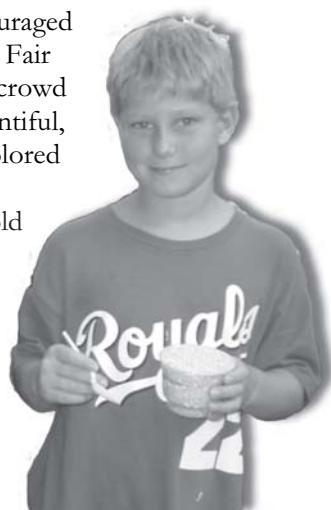
## Fight the BITE

See page 3 to find out what you can do to protect your family from West Nile Virus.

## Street Fair Better Late Than Never

Neither the humidity nor postponement due to weather discouraged residents from attending the sixth annual Mission Hills Street Fair on June 6, 2004. In fact, the event seemed to draw a larger crowd than ever. The food vendors multiplied this year, the prizes were plentiful, and most kids were sporting a balloon hat, face paint or rainbow-colored hair—and sometimes all three!

When asked what she liked best about the Street Fair, 10-year-old Hannah Bortnick said, “The contests. I like winning them!” New attractions to the fair this year included hair painting and the popular inflatable sports bungee cord. Vendors like Back Yard Burgers, Torre’s Pizzeria, Blue Moose, 75<sup>th</sup> Street Brewery, Mr. Goodcents, Dippin’ Dots and TCBY kept the hungry and thirsty multitudes satisfied. As always, the street dance spilled around Belinder Circle as youths boogied, discoed, and swung their partners in unison with the DJ., while relaxed parents



Goofy balloon hats and Dippin’ Dots ice cream were bonified hits with the kids at the sixth annual Street Fair.

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## Mayor’s Comments



David Fromm

At our first 2005 budget meeting in May, we addressed a \$500,000 potential deficit. This deficit includes the option to take advantage of a low interest loan from the Kansas Department of Transportation to rebuild

the entire 1.6-mile length of Mission Drive and bury any adjacent utilities. The debt service on this loan is about \$200,000. Mission Drive would not otherwise be in the capital budget until 2010. The 2005 budget also includes debt service on the loan to bury utilities on Belinder south of the circle this summer.

We are attempting to whittle down the deficit by raising fees, primarily for building

permits, and by identifying savings in other areas. We have already analyzed our largest expense category, police services, and have concluded that there are currently no opportunities for savings there. We are in the process of reviewing proposals for our second largest contract, maintenance services, and we are hopeful that we will realize some cost reductions there.

In any event, we are faced with the possibility of a two-mil property tax increase for 2005. One mil represents about a \$100 per year tax increase for the average homeowner. We feel this is not much to ask, given all the improvements we are trying to make to our beloved city. Even this probably would not be necessary if the State of Kansas had not eliminated our annual \$200,000 transfer

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chatted with neighbors and friends. “The block party is awesome,” gushed 13-year-old Annie Burcham.

In 1999, former Mayor Betty Keim wanted to have a citywide family event as part of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration. She assembled a committee of young mothers chaired by Beverly Brooks, and they decided to plan a street fair. There were numerous obstacles to overcome the first year, including establishing traffic management patterns and selecting the Street Fair location, which was originally



planned for City Hall. The committee felt Belinder Court was an event setting superior to City Hall.

“It was absolutely wonderful,” Keim remembered. “Everyone loved it and, by the looks of it, they’re still loving it.” One of Keim’s biggest gratifications is seeing the young teens continue to attend the Street Fair that they grew accustomed to during their childhood.



Special thanks go to Stephanie Barnow, Bridget Brill, Shelly Cartmell, Amy Copaken, Kelly LeGard, Hallie Peavey and Carolyn Simpson for their dedicated efforts to coordinate this year’s fair, which remains the biggest community event in Mission Hills. View more photos at [www.missionhills-ks.gov](http://www.missionhills-ks.gov). ■

## Mayor’s Comments continued from page 1

payment last year in order to solve its own budget problems.

In addition to battling the budget, we are also battling the press. I sent a letter to the editor of *Harper’s Magazine* recently. A former Mission Hills resident from the 1960s painted a very unflattering, to say the least, picture of our city in an essay entitled “Lie Down for America.” Copies of the article can be obtained by contacting City Hall or by ordering a back issue from [www.harpers.org](http://www.harpers.org). Here is my response:

Dear Editor:

*I was offended by Thomas Frank’s characterization of Mission Hills, Kansas as the home of “thieves, embezzlers, tax evaders, real-estate frauds and check forgers” in his essay entitled “Lie Down for America” in your April issue. I am surprised that you would print such an irresponsible and potentially libelous statement. I am only the mayor, but the residents I know are honest, hard working, polite, straightforward and generous.*

*Our residents are mostly professionals such as doctors, lawyers and consultants; small business owners; corporate executives; and retirees who enjoy living in a beautiful, well maintained and safe community. Mr. Frank seems to suggest that the quality of life we enjoy is somehow immoral and un-American.*

*I ask Mr. Frank: What American does not aspire to live in the nicest community possible? What American parents do not put their children in the best schools and safest environments they can find? What American does not seek advancement in his or her chosen profession?*

*If it is now a crime to pursue the American Dream, then I suppose the residents of Mission Hills are guilty as charged.*

David J. Fromm, Mayor

*P.S. On page 43, Mr. Frank claims “Nobody mows his own lawn in Mission Hills anymore.” I must be a “nobody” because I certainly mow my own lawn, unless I am too busy with my consulting business or mayoral responsibilities. Then my wife takes over.*

Have a safe and enjoyable summer. During these carefree yet busy months, please take the time to offer input to your elected officials, especially with respect to our challenging budget issues. Also, be sure to vote on the 1 percent Mission Hills sales tax issue, which I discussed in my last column and which will appear on the August primary. ■



## NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH: Think Safety This Summer

by Officer Steve Steck, Crime Prevention Officer

The Prairie Village Police Department Crime Prevention Officer reminds us to “Think Safety” as the weather heats up. Listed below are tips and suggestions to keep you and your family safe and secure throughout the summer months:

- ❑ **Always keep your garage door, interior door, and front door closed and locked**—even when at home. It only takes a moment for a burglar to enter your home and take something.
- ❑ **Remember to lock your windows and doors, and use your alarm system** when both home and away.
- ❑ If you park your vehicle outside overnight, **remove your garage door opener from view**. Burglars could use it to enter your home while you are sleeping.
- ❑ **Place your purse or wallet in a location that is out of view of a window**. Burglars are known to look into homes prior to breaking in to see what they can take.
- ❑ **Participate in the Operation Identification Program**. Record the serial numbers and model numbers to your electronics, remove any irreplaceable items from your home, and place them in a safety deposit box if applicable.
- ❑ **If going on vacation, have a neighbor watch your home and pick up the mail** and newspapers during your absence.
- ❑ **Sign up for the Housewatch Program**, a free service offered by the Prairie Village Police Department by calling 913-642-5151. The program involves the police doing routine checks of your residence while you are away to ensure it is secure.
- ❑ **Have a free residential security survey performed** at your residence by a Prairie Village Crime Prevention Officer.

Remember, crime prevention is a joint responsibility of the Police Department and the community. We cannot do it without you! ■

*For questions about this topic or any crime prevention issue, please contact the Crime Prevention Unit at 913-385-4613 or by e-mail at [ss Steck@pvkansas.com](mailto:ss Steck@pvkansas.com).*

## WEST NILE VIRUS: How to Avoid Spreading it

**W**est Nile Virus is established in Johnson County and is considered a potential threat to human health each year. Public health officials in the metro area have compiled information about how you can protect yourself and your family against West Nile Virus by reducing contact with mosquitoes.

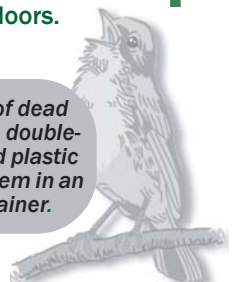
Mosquitoes typically spread West Nile Virus after they feed on infected birds and then bite people. The best prevention for the spread of the virus is to eliminate places in which mosquitoes can breed. Johnson County will not perform dead bird surveillance this year, although the Kansas Department of Health and Environment continues to work with Kansas State University's Veterinary College to test birds (Hotline: 1-877-228-2287).

Call the Johnson County Health Department at 913-826-1200 or visit [www.jocoks.com/pubhealth/home.htm](http://www.jocoks.com/pubhealth/home.htm) for medical information about West Nile Virus. ■

## Tips to Fight the **BITE**

- **Empty containers that could catch and hold standing water**, such as clogged gutters, boats, wheelbarrows, old tires, etc.
- **Make sure all windows and doors have screens and that they are in good repair.**
- **Wear light-colored clothing when going outdoors for long periods of time or at dusk and dawn**, when mosquitoes are most active.
- **Apply insect repellants containing DEET**, according to directions, when going outdoors.
- **Maintain swimming pools and drain pools that are not being used.**
- **Change the water in birdbaths at least twice a week.**

*For safe disposal of dead birds: wear gloves, double-bag birds in sealed plastic bags, and place them in an outside trash container.*





# Out on a Limb: Tree Talk

by George L. Eib, City Arborist

**T**rees are among the most valuable assets of a landscape. They enhance the environment, influence property values, display seasonal beauty and lend a sense of permanence to the landscape. This year we have had one of the best springs for flowering tree bloom in a long time, as we did not have a late freeze to destroy the flower buds. Generous rainfall has prompted lush foliage growth, which may require additional pruning to lift up the bottom limbs of trees and accomplish some shaping.

## Mulch: A Tree's Best Friend

Mulch provides many benefits to trees, including soil moisture retention, weed control and protection of the trunk from lawn mowers and string trimmers. Mulch can be a tree's best friend if placed correctly. Piling bark chips or other material against the trunk is a bad idea for three reasons: (1) it provides a habitat for rodents that can feed on the tree bark; (2) it can overstimulate basal shoot growth; and (3) constant moisture and lack of airflow can encourage collar rot or other diseases. Allow two to three inches next to trunk and do not apply mulching material more than two to three inches deep.

## Helpful Gardening Hints

- Watch for Spider mites and Bagworms on your Evergreens and have the trees sprayed.
- Water when we do not receive moisture, but take care not to overwater.
- Water container plants daily as needed. Feed them every two weeks.
- August is when you should begin planning bulbs for fall planting.
- August 15 to September 15 is the best time to overseed your lawns.

## 12 Years as a Tree City USA!



(Left to right) City Council President Charlie Hess, City Clerk Kerri Moran, City Arborist George Eib, and Mayor David Fromm commemorated Arbor Day with the planting of a Green Mountain Sugar Maple tree on the City Hall lawn April 13, 2004.

## Points in Brief

- **The City Council has approved mayoral appointments of Lorelei Gibson as chair of the Park Board and Liz Pendleton as a new member of the Planning Commission.**
- **City ordinance requires that owners remove all feces left by pets on sidewalks, parkland, or private or public property. It is illegal to deposit feces in catch basins or other bodies of water, which clogs and contaminates the watercourse. Violators of the ordinance can incur fines of \$100.00-500.00. City maintenance crews have discovered numerous bags of pet feces stopping up catch basins this year.**
- **On Election Day, more than 1,800 election workers are needed to serve the voters at the polls in Johnson County. Support the democratic process by adopting a polling place as a fund raising project for your organization, employee fund or charity. Call the Election Office for details at 913-792-3441, ext. 3314.**
- **Having your house number applied to the curb with reflective paint assists delivery, public safety and city personnel in locating your residence—especially in an emergency. The city has hired someone to paint house numbers on curbs as a citywide project this summer. We will paint the reflective house number to the left of your rightmost driveway approach when facing the house.**



A Little Tikes playground has been installed on the southwest corner of City Hall property and is open for use! Building a playground was a primary goal of the City Council for 2004, as there are no public play areas for children elsewhere in the city. The design meets ADA requirements.

# REFERENCE PAGE

## Trash/Recycling

Trash and recyclable collection begins at 7:30 a.m. on designated collection days, which vary by location in the city. If your collection day falls on or after a national holiday, your pickup day will be the next working day. Store your trash in sealed containers of 30 gallons or less in size. Securely closed 30-gallon or less plastic bags also are acceptable.

Please keep containers out of sight except on your scheduled pickup day. If you travel out of town, ask a neighbor to put out your trash barrels no earlier than 5 p.m. the day before pickup.



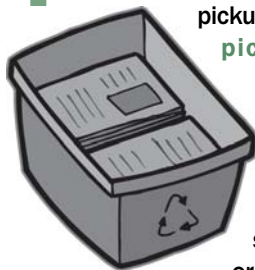
**Curbside Recycling** – Recycling bins (\$9) with lids (\$3) are available for purchase from City Hall. Put recyclables in the blue bin and place it by the curb on your designated trash/recycling day. Recyclable items include mixed paper, cardboard, aluminum/steel cans, and #1 PET and #2 HDPE plastic containers. For a complete list of acceptable and unacceptable materials, check out [www.missionhills-ks.gov](http://www.missionhills-ks.gov).

**Grass Clippings & Leaves** – Put yard waste in bags and place along the curb on trash collection day.

**Shrubbery & Tree Trimmings** – Must be no more than four feet in length and tied in bundles no larger than 18 inches in diameter or 65 pounds in weight. Place items at the curb.

**Heavy Household Trash** – Mission Hills offers citywide spring and fall heavy household item pickups. You can arrange an individual

**pickup for a fee** by calling Deffenbaugh at 913-631-3300.



**Household Hazardous Materials** – Do not put hazardous waste materials such as paint, flammable liquids, or automotive products at the curb.

These should be taken to a special disposal site in Mission. Call the Johnson County Environmental Department, 913-492-0402, to schedule an appointment.

## Frequently Requested Numbers

### Emergency

<b>Police, Fire, Ambulance</b> .....	<b>911</b>
(all numbers have 913 area codes unless otherwise stated)	
Animal Control .....	642-6868
Animal Medical Center (impoundment) .....	816-333-4484
Automobile licenses – Mission .....	826-1800
Deffenbaugh (trash/recycling) .....	631-3300
Driver's licenses .....	432-2266
Election Office .....	782-3441
Fire dispatcher (non-emergency) .....	432-1383
Hazardous waste (Johnson County) .....	492-0402
Johnson County Appraiser .....	829-9500
Johnson County Clerk .....	715-0797
Johnson County Courthouse (Olathe) .....	715-5000
Johnson County Information .....	894-8222
Johnson County MedAct (non-emergency) .....	715-1950
Johnson County Sheriff .....	782-0720
Johnson County Wastewater .....	681-3200
KCP&L customer service .....	816-471-5275
KCP&L power outages .....	1-888-544-4852
Kansas Gas Service .....	1-800-794-4780
Legislative Hotline .....	1-785-296-2149
Municipal Court .....	385-4680
Poison Control (KU Med) .....	588-6633
Police dispatcher (non-emergency) .....	642-5151
Shawnee Mission School District .....	993-6200
Southwestern Bell .....	1-800-246-9494
Time Warner Cable .....	816-358-8833
Water District No. 1 of Johnson County .....	895-5500

## City Meetings

- **City Council** meets at 6 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month
- **Architectural Review Board** meets every two weeks on Tuesday at 3 p.m.
- **Board of Zoning Appeals** meets monthly on different days at 8:30 a.m.
- **Park Board** meets approximately the third Wednesday of each month at 1 p.m.
- **Planning Commission** meets monthly on different days at 5 p.m.



Contact City Hall or check the city calendar on our Web page at [www.missionhills-ks.gov](http://www.missionhills-ks.gov) for specific dates and times. All meetings are held at City Hall, 6300 State Line Road, unless otherwise announced, and all are open to the public.



6300 State Line Road  
Mission Hills, KS 66208

*The Columns* is published three  
times a year for the residents  
of Mission Hills.

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## CITY CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

**Aug 3** Primary Election. Advance voting begins July 14.  
*Pcts 1 and 2 vote at First Lutheran Church, 6400  
State Line Road. Pcts 3 and 4 vote at Colonial Church,  
7039 Mission Road.*

**Nov 2** General Election. Advance voting begins October  
13. Same polling locations as Primary Election.

**Sept 25** Fall Heavy Household Trash Hauling.  
Place items at the curb by 7 a.m. Watch your mail for a  
reminder postcard, which lists acceptable and unac-  
ceptable items.

**Oct 3** Verona Columns Concert at 6 p.m.

GET ACCESS  
TO CITY INFO  
24 HOURS A DAY!

- Download and print permit applications
- Check the city calendar for upcoming events
- Request "No Parking" signs
- Get answers to frequently asked questions
- Learn about public works projects planned for your neighborhood
- View agendas and minutes for public meetings
- And more!

[www.missionhills-ks.gov](http://www.missionhills-ks.gov)



## Verona Columns Concert 2004

Featuring Alex Shum and friends, of the Kansas City Symphony Chamber Orchestra  
Sunday, October 3, 2004 at 6 p.m. More information to follow in the mail.

